

Living in the Past and Future :
Anthropological Fieldwork on Kikuyu
Immigrants in Maryland, USA¹

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Abstract

The number of African immigrants who live in the US has been steadily increasing. This is particularly true of the Kikuyu people from the Republic of Kenya whose immigration rates to the US have increased since the 1990s. Today, most of the Kikuyu people residing in the US are working long hours in jobs such as nursing ; They are buying houses, supporting their families, and even sending money back to their homeland. To date, many studies on immigrant workers from underdeveloped regions of the world have focused only on the workers' hardships. However, in this study we recognize that the Kikuyu people find meaning in their hard work and strive to attain a high level of education that helps them reach their goals.

Introduction

In November 2016, a candidate who promoted tougher immigration policies was elected the new president of the United States. He argued that illegal immigrants were a root cause of a worsening economy and social problems and thus needed to be deported. Despite such claims, the impression many of the immigrants left on the author of this study is at odds with such assertions. To a great degree, immigrants put their utmost effort into jobs most Americans avoid, contribute their own rich cultures, and are studious people who have always had a deep sense of gratitude toward America.

This study will focus on Kikuyu immigrants² to the US from the Republic of Kenya. Despite a rapid increase in the number of Kikuyu who have moved to the US from 1990 onwards, there is a severe lack of research pertaining to the Kikuyu currently residing in the US. Furthermore, there has been no research about the social and cultural diversity resulting from the differences in their birthplace and racial background. In order to clearly represent the lifestyle of those living in a foreign country, specifically their emotions and attitudes toward “work,” it would be beneficial to look at individual aspects such as their perspectives on work, and life experience.

Presently, the growing influence of the Kikuyu living in the US can clearly be seen from the massive remittances, i.e. money sent by the

¹ This paper is translated with revision from the paper published in African Report (Institute of Developing Economies, Jetro), No. 55, pp.38-50 in Japanese (<http://www.ide.go.jp/japanese/>)

² The Kikuyu people are the largest ethnic group in Kenya who speak the Bantu language (of the Bantu language family). The immigrants mentioned in this study are those who migrated by their own choice from the 20th century onwards.

³ According to the Central Bank of Kenya, 1.95 billion dollars were remitted to Kenya in 2017 (Daily Nation Feb 20, 2018).

immigrants back to Kenya³. What is more, the new generation of US-educated Kenyans includes those who have managed global business, graduated from institutions such as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and founded a telecommunications company, the headquarters of which is located in Kenya. Others are represented by Georgetown University graduates who started an online shop called Mamamikes.com which allows Kenyans living abroad to present their family back home with a “goat delicacy.” Over the past few years, Kenyans living abroad have been granted voting rights, have increased the frequency of communication with those residing back home due to the lower cost of international communication, and made more frequent visits to Kenya. And yet, there remains a lack of research into the daily lives of Kenyans residing in the US. This despite their close connection with the America.

For this study the author interviewed 102 Kikuyu people residing on the East coast of the US, primarily in Maryland. One of the people she met described Kenyans residing in the US as “people who live both the past and the future.” Essentially, this means that Kenyans work with little time to sleep, thinking back to their lives in Kenya but at the same time, working hard with the goal of someday returning home. This paper will feature such stories from such lives and reveal the work strategy that many skillful Kikuyu immigrants utilize in their sometimes harsh new reality. The goal is to illustrate the increasing presence of African immigrants and ultimately to show the significance of African immigrants living in the United States.

1. The Kenyans who sought out “The Land of Milk and Honey”

The Kenyan image of the United States is typically grand, and the

Kikuyu people's image of developed countries in general, such as the U.S. and Britain, goes as far as describing the US as "the land of milk and honey (*būrūri wa iria na ũki*)," the symbol of wealth (Ishii 2017). Why, however, did Kenyans decide to leave their home country for "land of wealth"?

Kenya was under colonial control of the United Kingdom from 1895 to 1963, and overseas travel for Kenyans was reserved mainly for students studying abroad. However, the colonial government showed little support for higher education for Kenyans (Stephens 2013, 21). Hence the number of Kenyan students studying abroad was limited until the beginning of the 20th century⁴. At the end of British colonial rule, the surviving Kenyans who had fought in the British army in World War II were granted a chance to study abroad in the U.K. Some even acquired British passports and studied abroad at their own expense (Kioko 2007, 157).

The onset of the Cold War changed the flow of students studying abroad in the United Kingdom and ultimately led to the first wave of Kenyans immigrating to the United States in the 1950-60s. During the Cold War period, the American and the Soviet Union governments focused on influencing younger generations who would potentially become future leaders of their respective countries. Both governments competed to offer study abroad experiences to Kenyan students (Okoth 2003). While the USSR allowed these students to study medicine, agriculture, economics in East Germany, Cuba, Russia, and Ukraine (D'Errico and Feinstein 2011, 1294), the US focused on the attractiveness of John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King as magnets drawing African

⁴ In the 1920-30s, only elites such as the son of chief Koinange or Jomo Kenyatta, the first president of Kenya, were able to study abroad.

students to organized government-sponsored overseas programs (airlift). Such students who studied abroad in the US as participants of these programs were mostly Kenyans. More than 676 students from 1959 to 1969 made up the first wave of Kenyan immigrants to the US (Stephens 2013). Most of these exchange students went back to Kenya after graduating to help develop their own country, only a few remained in the US (Stephens 2013, 75).

The next wave of immigrants came at the beginning of the 1990s and continued into the 2000s. Many of the Kikuyu immigrants the author met in Maryland immigrated to the United States during this period and are now permanently residing there. What were the push factors from their home country that led to immigration? Many of those interviewed stated higher education and economic interests as their main reasons for going to the US. This was due to a lack of access to higher education in their home country during the 1990s. They wanted to pursue the American Dream. During the Moi regime in Kenya (1978–2002), elementary education was made free. This allowed for increased opportunities in education; however, with only about six operating universities in Kenya in the mid-90s, the enrollment capacity of applicants could not accommodate the numbers of students who wanted to finish their studies domestically at the university level (Okoth 2003). The domestic economy was also stagnating, and a large number of youth with no legitimate job prospects found themselves idle in their villages and towns. It was during this period that Kenyan youth began eyeing US colleges by raising enough money for the first semester of college and traveling fees from family financial aid and donations from the villages. One Kikuyu male (mid-30s) mentioned that it was very simple to obtain a letter of acceptance (I-20) from US colleges in 1997 and that 30 Kenyan students were on

his connecting flight from Kenya to Baltimore-Washington International Airport.

2. How Kikuyus Residing in the United States are Perceived

(1) Finding the Kikuyu in the United States

Where are the Kikuyu people living in the US? By looking at the demographic data, it is possible to figure out where Kenyans transmigrated, but there are no available data that show the subgroup of ethnic distribution. From this, the author decided to draw up a list of obituaries from three news sites popular with Kenyans residing in the US and researched where the person had passed away (which state had the highest concentration) and which ethnic background they came from. When a Kenyan person dies abroad, the family and close friends try to gain wide support by publishing the news of the death on an Internet news site with the aim of raising contributions for medical needs or shipping costs to transport the remains back home. During the six years between 2009 to 2015, the author was able to distinguish the ethnic background of 360 people through their names⁵. The states that had more than 10 Kikuyu people were Maryland (36), Texas (26), Georgia (26), California (17), Massachusetts (13), North Carolina (15), and Washington (11). This data match the data from the author's interviews about the Kikuyu people and show how they are concentrated primarily on the East coast and the South of the US. In addition, it almost completely overlaps with where African Americans⁶ transmigrated in the 2000 US census. The Bureau of Statistics announced in 2010 that

⁵ Sorted using nicknames and Christian names, 28 people were excluded due to being unable to discern his/her racial background.

⁶ In this paper, "African Americans" point to African people born in the U.S., and is differentiated from the African immigrants.

about 106,000 Kenyans were residing in the US based on the U.S. census, but that it was not possible to estimate the number of people overlooked by the census.

(2)Chain Migration

Why is such a large number of Kikuyu people concentrated in Maryland? By unraveling history, one finds that the origin stems from two Kikuyu university professors who immigrated from the same Kenyan state and who brought their families, close friends, and people from their hometown in Murang'a County, the massif central in Kenya, in the late 1960s and the start of the 1970s. In addition, the population of Kenyans in the US expanded dramatically by such people bringing and accepting family members and peers from their hometowns and having children of their own while in the United States. As a pioneer, Professor A decided to give back to his homeland by bringing 30 people and allowing them to go to school. He accommodated them by dividing a room in his detached house to provide them living quarters. Murang'a County is made up of fertile land, has a high population density, and has severe land fragmentation, which is why many of the people the author met understood that they came from areas where land resources were scarce.

As previously stated, many of the Kikuyu people who immigrated to the US came as students and now permanently reside and work in the US. With the increase of those who traveled abroad for celebrations such as their children's graduation, marriage, or births, or for meeting up with their work or immigrant family, the number of third generation families living together is not small.

(3)Field Work

The author conducted interviews and participant observations in areas where the research subjects resided—102 first-generation Kikuyu immigrants⁷ who have lived for more than five years in the U.S. (61 males, 41 females), and were mainly concentrated in cities in Maryland and the suburbs of Baltimore. Many of them are healthcare providers. Other professions include educators, office workers, government workers, as well as those who are self-employed or working part-time.

Additionally, to understand the society of Kikuyu immigrants, the author conducted surveys of 47 Kikuyu heads of household who were from Muranga. Of the 47 heads of household, 14 were single-person households while three households had American wives. From this data, it was found that more than 70 percent of the participants had immigrated to the US between 1991 and 2005 and are currently in their thirties or forties. Another characteristic is that many of the participants are highly educated. Eighty-seven percent have an academic background of an undergraduate college or graduate school degree. The research subjects were asked directly to participate in this study through the snowballing effect, introducing themselves and asking to interview people at Kenyan events that are scheduled almost every weekend.

3. Working Hard to Achieve Success

Almost every Kikuyu immigrant has had the experience of managing multiple jobs and working 16-hour days. This is necessary in order to not only earn enough money for their daily expenses and school tuitions, but also to send money back to their families or to purchase land in their

⁷ The 102 Kikuyu immigrant interviewees include 7 children and 13 people of another ethnic background.

home country. Conventional research on immigrants tends to focus from beginning to end on the workers having to live at the bottom rung of the socio-economic ladder and their hardships. In contrast, the author's research reveals that they are skillfully applying themselves in their jobs, efficiently earning in a niche market, or focusing on higher educational attainment in hopes of a higher wage. Moreover, efforts to overcome racial discrimination, job fulfillment, and working with pride as a Kenyan were observed. From here on, the paper will introduce the stories of unskilled labor most Kikuyu immigrants experienced right after coming to the United States—those of common occupations such as nurses or educators, or those that cater specifically to Africans.

(1) Unskilled labor workers

Almost every Kikuyu immigrant has worked long hours as a car park attendant, night-shift employee at a home for the disabled, a clerk at a convenience store, or a dishwasher immediately after coming to the US, all the while attending a nearby or an online college. A typical example would be Ms. B (in her 40s), who worked part-time from 8 AM to 4 PM at a day-care center and attended an evening college class in Information Technology. She earned \$5,000 monthly by working the night shift every night from 10 PM to 7 AM at a home for the mentally disabled. Her daily routine was extremely busy, but she defends her grueling schedule in that she was able to take naps with the children at the day care center, catch some sleep during the night shift, and share her daily living expenses by living with four other Kenyans who took turns driving to their university.

Many immigrants described such school days being the hardest period of their lives, but it can also be seen that they made a concerted effort

to stabilize their lives. Mr. C (in his 40s), who currently works as a nurse, describes his life as follows. He worked as a dishwasher at two restaurants and started attending a university in Washington D.C. after learning about its short-term nursing course.

At that time, I was good at writing so I wrote several of the Nigerian students' reports for college and was gifted with a car worth \$700 at the end of the term. When I went to large supermarkets in the early morning at five, there were some people waiting for the buses going to Washington D.C., so I often earned my gas money by driving them there for \$5. It was a dangerous job. Once they realized that I had an accent, some told me to "wait for a moment" so that they could pay and run away. There were times when I had to drive with a gun to my head. (male in his 40s)

In the 1990s, the two Immigrants explained that it was easy to find part-time, albeit, dangerous work in the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and the Lehman Brother collapse of 2008. The Kikuyu people who immigrated after the crisis were barely able to find employment through a superior's recommendation, and they tell that they worked hard to please their American bosses. Their effort could be seen by working the unpopular weekend shift managing a car park or taking the initiative to take on the dangerous night shift. They exchanged crucial information in their community and were advised to hide their efforts at a higher education or that they had a car, so that they would not lose their job out of jealousy from their American bosses.

On the other hand, how did those fare who dropped out of school or worked as an unskilled worker without going to school? Mr. D (in his

60s) worked as an accountant in a Kenyan federal agency and now works at a gas station after immigrating with his wife right before reaching his retirement age of 55.

My monthly wage in Kenya (as an accountant) was 22,000 shillings (22,000 yen at today's exchange rate). However, with America's hourly wage being \$10, I can earn \$2,400 every month. If I exchange that to Kenyan currency, that is 240,000 shillings. Only a corporate executive can earn that much money in Kenya. If I can buy some land back home, and build a beautiful house for my parents, I would call this a success. (male in his 60s)

One of the symbols of "success" for the Kikuyu people is having a family and owning real estate in their home country, and Mr. D had achieved both. In addition, he was managing the expenses of a Kenyan church⁸ and was respected as one of the leaders of the church by the church members. Shiva (2011), who researches Indian women working as immigrant nurses in the US, explains that her husband worked hard in the immigrant church to establish a social standing despite not being able to find a proper job. Like Mr. D, many Kikuyu males who worked as unskilled workers, such as in the field of elder care, report that their work in the church meant everything to them.

Of course, one cannot earn everything through an easygoing lifestyle built on part-time work. With the high cost of living in the US, immigrants try to lower their daily expenses by staying with a relative

⁸ There are 12 Kenyan churches in Maryland, according to the author's knowledge, and 10 of them have a predominantly Kikuyu following. The mass will usually be in English, but there are three churches that provide simultaneous translation into Swahili or the Kikuyu language.

or at fellow immigrant's house or sharing a house with other people. Mr. E (in his 40s), who left his wife and children back in Kenya, works the night-shift at a home for the disabled while he lives with Ms. F (in her 70s), a Kikuyu. He explains that their working schedules dovetail, with Mr. E coming back home from work in the morning and Ms. F going out at the same time to work as a convenience store cashier. Such situations of living together are not common in Kenya. Mr. E explains in the following:

A Kikuyu man cannot sleep under the same roof with his mother, mother-in-law, or a female of the same generation. But with the current situation in the US, it cannot be helped, and there is no reason to have this large room all for one person. I have not told my wife (in Kenya) about this living situation, as I do not want her to suspect me of having a girlfriend. (male in his 40s)

As has already been mentioned, unskilled laborers creatively utilize various tactics to pay the lowest rent. Even in the present, there is a fixed number of Kikuyu immigrants who accept such lifestyles, but many are trying to earn more money as a nurse or an educator while trying to obtain a degree in the US.

(2)Healthcare Professional

More than half of the people the author met were working as healthcare professionals, such as a regular nurse, associate nurse or nurse assistant. They work day and night so they seem to be always tired. Regular nurses and associate nurses tend to have high social status and earn from between \$40,000 to \$70,000 annually after acquiring their

nursing degree license. Nurse assistants can be employed and receive increased hourly wages just by attending the month-long training provided at hospitals or nursing homes. This is far more profitable job than working in a convenience store. What is the everyday lifestyle of Kikuyu people who are engaged in medical care? The immigrant couple Mr. G and Mrs. G, who are both in their '50s and who immigrated in 2001, provide a typical example. Mr. G used to be a pastor and Mrs. G was a high school teacher in their home country of Kenya. Currently, they have three children.

My wife studied the science of nursing in America and became a nurse, whereby I became a nursing aide working in a nursing home. She worked from 3:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. and I worked from 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. In the morning, I ate breakfast when I got home from work, sent kids to school, and slept at 8:00 a.m. After that, I woke up at 1:30 p.m. and my wife left home before 2:30 p.m. That was the kind of lifestyle I was living. When our youngest child was still nursing, my wife brought our child to workplace and nursed the baby in the car. This was very tough. (Mr. G)

My parents-in-law visited America for six months. When my husband cooked dinner, fed the children and made chai (milk tea) for me when I came home late at night, my mother-in-law asked me "What is going on between you two?" But in order to show my respects to my parents-in law, I did not answer the question and my husband explained the situation. I had to adjust to the American life here. (Mr. G's wife)

Since Mr. G and Mrs. G were respected as a pastor and a teacher at Kenya, they said that they felt humiliated having to change people's diapers at nursing home. But being Christian was an emotional support, and they endured by thinking that these jobs were nothing but a simple stepping stone for them. As can be seen from this example, when child rearing is added to the daily routine of health care workers, they are extremely busy. Many cases of such a schedule have led to depression from overworking. But it is an advantage for immigrant families to be adjusting to the work shift as a couple, taking working day and night and raising a child without hiring help. In addition, there are many nurses who work every day by contracting with multiple medical facilities and earn an amount that cannot be earned back home in Kenya.

Obviously, not every single student of Kikuyu background visits America with a dream of becoming a nurse. When Ms. H (in her 30s) heard that a Kenyan man, whom she met at the airport, was going to study nursing, she answered "It is crazy to come all the way over to America just to become a nurse." Ms. H's siblings, who are in Kenya, dream of becoming a doctor, a lawyer, or an engineer. No one dreams of becoming a nurse due to nursing's bad reputation in Kenya. A Kikuyu nurse explained it this way:

The nurses in Kenya do not do anything different from the work of the doctors. However, this is illegal and arrogant. When the women of the village in Kenya go to the hospital because of the labor pains, the nurse twists and scolds instead of encouraging the mother to work hard. Even though giving birth should be a wonderful journey for women, nurses tend to leave them, threaten them by saying "You will die if you do nothing about it", or use swear words instead of

supporting them. The positive meaning of the childbirth is lost. The respect towards patients does not exist. (female in her 40s)

Although this less than favorable reputations is still evident, new Kikuyus in America hear that they can receive the qualification of nurse on the next day after graduating from a nursing school and allowing for an employment without an issue. So, does this mean that people who reluctantly continue their jobs in the medical field have less employment discriminations and higher incomes? The interesting point is that many nurses feel it is rewarding and are positive about their work as a nurse.

The high school, which I used to attend in Kenya was one of the top-class schools in Kenya. Many of its graduates became lawyers or doctors. Although I wanted to become an engineer, my brother, who visited America before me, suggested I attend nursing school, get a job, save money then eventually aim to become an engineer. I used to be depressed, wondering why I came all the way to America just to become a nurse, but after receiving assistance and becoming a nurse, I currently really like my job. I am happy seeing patients get healthy. As an engineer, I am not sure if I would have felt this much satisfaction. (male in his 30s)

For the night shifts, I need to organize lots of documents. Daytime shift nurses get tired from walking around. Although I have to check the data collected by the nurses during the daytime and correct the mistakes, I like it because there are many things, which I can understand and learn that “they have done this, in order to do this”. (female in her 30s)

Many of the Kikuyu nurses become night shift full-time nurses as the hourly wages are increased; however commuting to work can be cruelly bitter in Maryland as the temperature during the winter night go down to less than minus ten degrees. But based on the remarks from the two people above, the interaction with the patients and the pleasure in acquiring new knowledge is a clear benefit. Nevertheless, it does not necessarily mean that they want to be promoted in their workplaces. A head nurse is salary-based position. Therefore, the salary will not go up even if shifts and work-loads are increased. Moreover, being promoted to a managerial position would result in increased responsibilities and less flexibility should they want extended time off to travel back to Kenya.

Competition among managers does exist, but it is mostly among Americans. Immigrant nurses like us are not interested in getting promoted. Rather than that, we are aiming for a higher level by further educating ourselves. Friends of other immigrant nurses are also attending school. I think I would refuse even if I was invited to become a principal. I am not interested in the political stuff. (female in her 30s)

Like the woman from this interview, it is not infrequent for people to aim to become a certified Nurse Specialist. This position allows nurses to do diagnosis and treatment up to a certain level. It is more advanced than that of a regular nurse. If the workload hours are more humane, “you can live a lifestyle like normal human beings.” My interviews revealed that the position of a health care professional is popular among Kenyans living not only in Maryland where there are many large hospitals, but

also in other states in the United States and England.

(3)School Teacher

For the Kikuyu immigrants, the position of schoolteacher is still popular as it also receives elevated social respect in Kenya. Teaching positions are easily obtained in America as there are no nepotistic hiring practices like in Kenya.

However, what strategies are there to live as a teacher? In reality, they tend to specialize in mathematics, a subject which is said Americans are not good at, or special needs education, also reportedly not popular among American teachers. Many take the initiative to work especially in the public school that have many students with problematic behaviors in inner cities—in particular at a public high school in Baltimore City, where many African-American students attend. These positions in Baltimore City tend to be well paid, because there are various issues in these school districts in which many family households lack a father. Baltimore City has one of the highest crime rates in the United States. Interviews of two Kikuyu teachers revealed the following.

Many of the fathers of the students hardly get involved in the students' life as they sell drugs even after getting released from prison. They will probably only know about grandfathers. Therefore, (students harbor) very negative attitudes toward black male teachers. Moreover, it is even harder to maintain discipline when the teacher has a foreign accent. (male in his 30s)

None of my 35 students live with their real father and all of them have been raised by their mother, stepfather, grandmother or

siblings. 70% of those students have some kind of problem. (male in his 50s)

Many of the Kikuyu immigrants have reported experiencing racism at work, but they say to live in a city like Baltimore as a black person is quite challenging. People suspect them to be criminals or hiding guns. Moreover, the relationship with other African-Americans is not always a positive one, and as explained above, Kikuyu, especially teachers, are struggling in that society.

As a countermeasure to such environment, many of the Kikuyu explain that it is important to have pride as an African, and to understand and accept others. Kikuyus say, "We, Africans understand who we are and which time we are living." Thus, they are self-sustaining and are able to understand the circumstances of African Americans by learning and experiencing their society and culture. The teacher above, tells that he was first surprised when one of his students came up to him and said "you are my nigger". He thought of teaching him not to use such word, but their awkward relationship has changed after he realized that it has the friendly connotation of "you are my friend".

As above, it was observed that Kikuyu teachers are struggling handling American students. Even so, the reason why they do not transfer to a suburban school with well behaving students is that the pay is higher. The annual salary for a teacher: who works in another state was around \$30,000; however once transferred to a public high school at Baltimore, his annual salary rose to \$80,000. In fact, Maryland records one of the highest household incomes among all states in America⁹, and

⁹ Kaiser Family Foundation (<http://kff.org/other/state-indicator/median-annual-income/?currentTimeframe=0>). Accessed on September 10, 2018.

it can be said that the Kikuyu teacher's economical decision was tactical for choosing to teach in a challenging school with high pay.

So, what do Kikuyu teachers think about promotion at workplace? The following content reflects the opinion of Kikuyu teachers.

I am not interested in becoming a principal. It has many rules, heavy responsibilities. If parents accuse a principal, he may lose his job. Obtaining a doctorate in graduate school will lead to a higher salary, so that is preferable. (male in his 30s)

Once again, the intention of attaining a higher degree is stronger than that of promotion. To that end, many of the Kikuyu teachers are currently attending graduate schools. Although the salary may rise a little by getting a higher academic degree, some teachers stated that they would rather change job to an international organization or would like to become a university faculty member in Kenya. Some female teachers who have small children stated that they are dissatisfied when there is too much office work and they do not have enough time for class preparation. But they save time by using a website called “Teachers pay Teachers” where they can buy teaching materials cheaply.

(4)Working with Africans

Due to the growth in population of Kenyan immigrants, there are more businesses targeting Kenyans and Africans. There are niche businesses that provide services to satisfy Kenyan wants and needs include babysitters, hairstylists, school managers, chefs who cook Kenyan dishes, DJs specialized in African music, among others.

For example, Ms. J (in her 60s) earns \$1,200 (for 2 kids, \$800 for a

kid) every month working as a sleep-in babysitter in a Kikuyu family's house. She gets weekends off twice a month. Ms. J goes back to the apartment she shares with another babysitter on her days off, and goes to church on Sundays. It is extremely difficult for working Kikuyu women to find a babysitter like Ms. J, so they try to find out by word of mouth and sometimes they seek help in other states. They say they feel safe leaving their child with a babysitter if she is African.

Also, the job of a hairstylist who weaves hair extensions imported from Kenya is another possible permanent work. Hair extensions that are sold at supermarkets in Kenya are of high quality. A woman in her 30s bought them in large quantity when she visited her hometown, brought them back and drew customers to her house and did weaving for four to five hours earning \$100.

There are some people who work on the side as a DJ specializing in Kenyan and Kikuyu music at parties for Kenyans. Mr. K (in his 40s) works for a company on weekdays and works as a DJ on weekends playing music that hosts Kenyan events such as fund-raising parties, birthday parties, pre-wedding parties to raise money for wedding. In July 2015, a Kenyan event was held and Mr. K earned \$300. At such parties, Kenyan foods are served. Usually, women bring them, but on one occasion some busy people asked a woman who makes and sells Kenyan food as a side business, to make Chapati, a type of bread, for \$1 each.

It is evident that new businesses targeting Africans have been created, but to expand them, strategies are required. Here I am going to introduce a school care program popular among Kenyans.

Ms. L (in her 50s) worked as a primary school teacher in Baltimore and started afterschool care center recently. A unique feature of this center is that children perform Kenyan songs and dances both at Kenyan

public holiday parties and welcoming parties for the Kenyan president that are held in Maryland and Washington DC. Most of the students are Kenyan, but there are some African-Americans as well.

Ms. L knows that hard working Kenyans are experiencing difficulties raising their children but nevertheless they continue to put much weight on education. For example, a nurse who works from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. is not able to take her child to and from the private school that the child attends, so Ms. L goes to her house every early morning to drop off the child at school. She also picks up the child after school, brings the child to the afterschool care center and makes the child do homework, and sends him/her home. Her flexible schedule allows her to deal with sudden changes in parents' daily routine. The fee structure is \$20 to \$35 per hour including tuition fee and pick up fee. Ten to twenty students have used this service daily. Thirty to forty children participated in a summer camp, where they attended a Swahili language class.

This afterschool care center is popular because 70 to 80 children gather every Saturday before the Kenyan event and are taught Swahili songs and dances. Kikuyu parents are often ashamed that their children unable to speak Swahili. Ms. L reports that she "wants to help Kenyan children from getting buried in American culture". She also said the parent meetings will be their opportunities to discuss various problems among themselves. On the other hand, there are some Kenyans who have negative opinion toward this kind of Kenyan activities.

It is disadvantageous to be involved mainly with Kenyans. Children will not become Kenyans in America, but they become Americans. They should learn proper English rather than learning the Kikuyu or Swahili language. (male in his 50s)

In another draft, I would like to write about the current situation of the second generation, whose language is a significant problem in Kenyan society in America. Some Kenyan parents who want their children to learn a Kenyan language send their children to boarding school in Kenya, but the separation of parent and child is uncommon. Ms. L's business strategy is to respond to Kenyans' wants and needs, and she also supports bereaved families of Kenyans who have passed away in Maryland. She helps with the preparation of funerals and does master of ceremony duties to earn trust.

Conclusion: Toward the maturation of immigrant society

Mr. M in his 30s, who helped the author's fieldwork, recently bought a house with a pool in the suburb of Baltimore with a loan. He finally realized American dream by working hard as a night nurse and taxi driver.

Listening voices from Kikuyu immigrants living in America, lives of people who are tied up with work have been revealed. The author did not get to meet with the few immigrants who fell on hard times and became homeless in Maryland, many people who went back to their hometown, people who developed disease from stress, or people addicted to alcohol. The Kikuyu immigrants in this report are people work hard to be an upstart.

However, some immigrants are rethinking their quality of their life, tiring of their busy life. One woman decided to quit her weekend job, regretting working with only dollar signs in her eyes and buying her children whatever they want. She is the only Kikuyu who lives in downtown Baltimore, but she says it is a perfect place to raise children since cramming school tuition is free and sports clubs are in the

neighborhood that children can easily walk to. There is also a good private school. This is a new approach that has not been adopted by the majority of Kenyans.

After the inauguration of the US president, African immigrants may be in greater fear about their treatment in the United States. In order to survive thus far in their new land of America, they have lived harsh lives, sometimes even slipping through legal loopholes. Even so, their role should be reevaluated in light of the tough jobs they take and the positive effort that they make in society. Because they fully know their roots and have great pride, they can teach many things to the multinational country that is the United States. By understanding the daily life of Kenyan immigrants, it is possible to see the operation of human business that benefits the society where they migrated. The population of African immigrants in America will most likely continue to grow in the future, and they may help to support prosperity in America—a country founded on immigrants.

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